

## Foreign Affairs

### Series:

#### GS-130 – Foreign Affairs Officer

Foreign Affairs Officers perform mission critical work and represent the single largest Civil Service occupational series in the Department. They deal with, and communicate on, a wide variety of issues including economic and commerce, political-military affairs, intelligence, international understanding, democracy, human rights and labor, international narcotics and law enforcement as well as arms control and nonproliferation.

The Department of State is the lead U.S. foreign affairs agency and plays the primary role in developing, implementing, and communicating the President's foreign policy. As the lead foreign affairs agency, the Department has the primary role in:

- Leading interagency coordination in developing and implementing foreign policy.
- Managing the foreign affairs budget and other foreign affairs resources.
- Leading and coordinating U.S. representation abroad, conveying U.S. foreign policy to foreign governments and international organizations through U.S. embassies and consulates in foreign countries and diplomatic missions to international organizations.

- Conducting negotiations and concluding agreements and treaties on issues ranging from trade to nuclear weapons.
- Coordinating and supporting international activities of other U.S. agencies and officials
- Engaging with foreign audiences to communicate U.S. policies, the context in which those policies are developed and the underlying values of this nation.

Civil Service Foreign Affairs Officers play a key role in the creation and communication of policy. They also advise on, administer, supervise, or perform research or other professional work in the formulation and direction of the foreign affairs of the U.S. Government or in the study and disposition of information bearing on international relations.

Using their knowledge of one or more geographic or functional areas, Foreign Affairs Officers proactively research, validate, analyze, evaluate and interpret information from a wide variety of sources to identify, assess, and report on matters that are significant to the development, communication, and execution of U.S. foreign policy. They draft and coordinate papers, cables, briefings and guidance for senior level consideration and for international discussions and negotiations.

Foreign Affairs Officers engaged in public diplomacy use the skills and processes

described above, along with their understanding of policy and international audiences, to research, create and deliver products and programs to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals.

In addition to strong analytical, interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills, the work also requires the ability to establish liaison with analysts, officials and information professionals throughout the foreign policy and intelligence communities. This is essential to promote the exchange of vital information. Knowledge of the missions, roles, and responsibilities of the U.S. foreign affairs agencies, non-governmental organizations, the media, academia and citizens groups is also needed for successful job performance. Strong interpersonal skills are required for Foreign Affairs Officers who provide information and case work assistance to the public or who respond to inquiries from other government officials, the press, and non-governmental organizations.

Foreign Affairs Officers are employed in every regional bureau and most functional bureaus throughout the Department in the Washington, D.C. area. Most Foreign Affairs Officers enter the Department with a Bachelor's or Master's degree in such fields as international relations, political science, economics, history, or geography. If you are considering longer term overseas assignments, see the section on

*Overseas Opportunities* later in this publication and enroll in appropriate tradecraft training.

## Technical Competencies

The Department's subject matter experts have identified the following specific technical competencies to assist employees and managers in determining competency levels and staff development needs.

**Case Work/Public Inquiries** - Tactfully, courteously and accurately responds to inquiries from other government officials, the press and the public. Either provides the needed information directly or refers the inquirer to a more appropriate source, while exercising discretion and maintaining confidentiality. Has a fundamental understanding of foreign affairs laws, policies and programs as well as the roles of other Departmental bureaus and U.S. government agencies that provide case work assistance to the public.

**Communications Technology** - Maintains a current knowledge of information technology applications for communication and program purposes (e.g. chat rooms, interactive websites, digital video conferencing)

**Computer Literacy** - Is skilled in performing essential computer functions including office automation as well as

Department or bureau specific systems related to foreign affairs work. Follows computer security procedures.

**Foreign Policy Development** - Maintains a current knowledge of U.S. foreign policy objectives and programs to discern the relevancy and assess the implications of social, political, economic, geographic and military issues, developments, and events affecting the formulation, communication, execution, and receptivity of U.S. foreign policy. Displays a knowledge of one or more geographic or functional specialty areas sufficient to identify, analyze and evaluate the foreign policy implications of issues and developments related to those areas. Proactively researches information from a wide variety of sources. Knows and uses research methods and techniques to validate, analyze, evaluate, and interpret information. Is able to identify, assess, and report on matters significant to the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy. Knows how to draft and coordinate papers, cables, and guidance for senior level consideration and for international discussions and negotiations. Is able to effectively communicate, defend and negotiate positions.

**Grants Management** - In addition to program management and program subject matter knowledge, understands concepts underlying Federal grants management,

including the use of grants and cooperative assistance agreements and familiarization with appropriate OMB circulars. Demonstrates the ability to make determinations of the adequacy of an applicant's plans and cost proposals to accomplish project objectives, the extent of a grantee's compliance with programming and funding requirements as well as the quality and degree of a grantee's performance.

**Intelligence** - Takes information/data from all sources, both classified and open. Evaluates information/data impartially. Produces and uses analysis which is separate from policy. Reports conclusions accurately and objectively, even if disturbing to or unwelcome by policy maker.

**Intragency/Interagency Relations** - Displays a public opinion and decision-making consistent with U.S. national interests in order to increase the ability to establish liaison with analysts and officials throughout the foreign policy and intelligence communities to promote the exchange of information vital to both spheres of operation. Networks and establishes working relationships with colleagues both within and outside of the Department. Interactions with colleagues and supervisors are conducted in a courteous and professional manner, demonstrating the ability to work cooperatively and effectively with other persons. Shows a knowledge of the missions, roles and

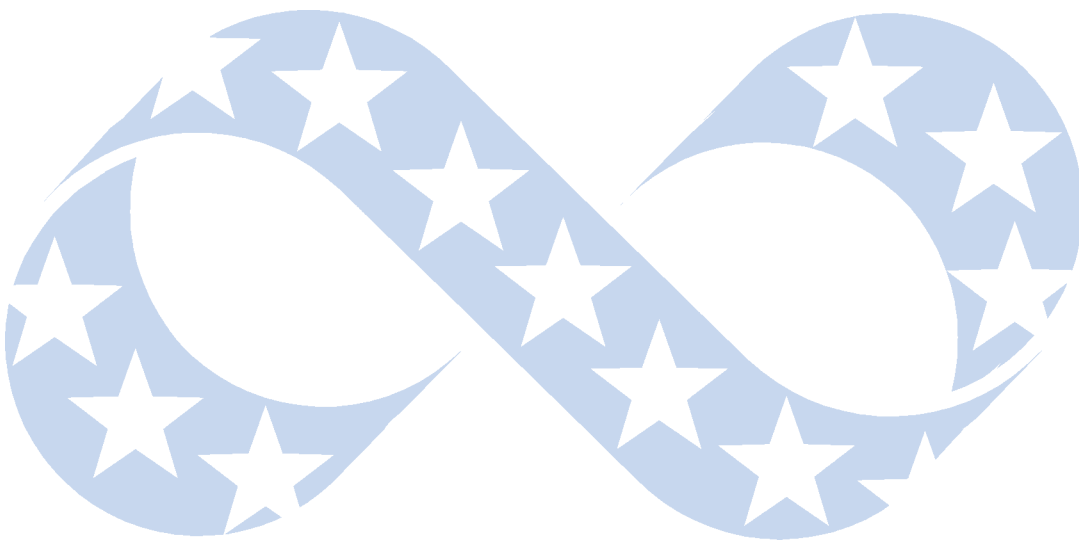
responsibilities of employees of the U.S. foreign affairs agencies, non-governmental organizations, and citizens groups.

**Project Management** - Shows the ability to apply knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities. This encompasses the planning, scheduling, and controlling of a series of integrated tasks to successfully achieve objectives.

**Public Diplomacy/Public Affairs** - Demonstrates awareness and understanding of public diplomacy programs and resources that aim to inform, engage and influence global mutual understanding and build trust between Americans and people and institutions around the world. Displays an understanding of American society and values, culture, governmental

policies and history as well as an awareness of cross-cultural issues and cross-cultural communication techniques. Possesses advanced communication skills, knowledge of communications theory, and the ability to communicate with a wide variety of audiences. Maintains a working knowledge of geographic and functional issues.

**Security** - Knows and follows Department of State document and computer security procedures for the classification, marking, handling, disclosure, reproduction, transmission and destruction of classified documents. Recognizes and responds appropriately to approaches by foreign intelligence services and other threats to national security.



## Foreign Affairs: Basic Level

As a beginning Foreign Affairs Officer, you will be supporting mid and senior level officers by developing, coordinating, and clearing inputs into public policy documents. Your focus will most likely be on collecting, analyzing, applying and communicating information related to one country or a limited geographic area or on a specific issue (or issues) or program.

You will also begin to develop contacts in other USG agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, academia, the media and the private sector. Therefore, you will need to develop the technical skills to perform foreign policy work in the Department. Completion of tradecraft, area studies and public diplomacy courses are vital. In addition, coursework in written and oral communication, interpersonal skills, beginning end-user software applications as well as team building and leadership are also very beneficial.

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Basic Level</b>	<p><b>Orientation</b>            PN125 Orientation for Civil Service Employees (for new State Department employees)            PS800 Cyber Security Awareness (distance learning; required to use OpenNet Plus)</p> <p><b>Foreign Affairs</b>            PN113 Introduction to Working in an Embassy (classroom or distance learning)            PP510 Global Issues            PT203 Washington Tradecraft            PY113 Public Diplomacy Basics or            PY114 Introduction to Public Diplomacy</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b>            PA143 Customer Service Training            PK240 Effective Speaking and Listening Skills</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b>            PT129 Team Building</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b>            PS218 OpenNet Plus and the Internet            PS284 Cable Express for End Users            PS432 MS Word 2003 Level One            PS498 Intro to MS Outlook 2003</p>	<p><b>Language</b>            300 Early Morning Language Classes</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b>            PK143 Proofreading            PK146 Job Savvy: Skills for Workplace Success            PK159 Drafting Correspondence</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b>            PT251 Productively Managing Stress</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b>            PS440 MS PowerPoint 2003 Level One            PS450 MS Access 2003 Level One            PS470 MS Excel 2003 Level One</p>

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Basic Level</b>	<p><b>Recommended Rotational Assignments</b></p> <p>Short rotational assignments in the following areas:</p> <p>Bureau Front Office (to learn S/ES correspondence procedures)</p> <p>U.S. embassy (to understand the overseas environment)</p> <p>Bureau Policy Office (to learn policy development)</p> <p>Assignment length varies according to needs</p>	<p>Take some distance learning courses through FSI's FasTrac Program. For a course catalog or to enroll, visit <a href="http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac">http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac</a> on the OpenNet.</p> <p><b>Suggested Developmental Activities</b></p> <p>Attend the following briefings:</p> <p>Security/RIA Net (Diplomatic Security)</p> <p>S/ES Procedures Briefing (Executive Secretariat)</p> <p>Read your Bureau Performance Plan</p> <p>Read professional journals and magazines such as <i>The Economist</i>, <i>The Foreign Affairs Journal</i>, <i>Foreign Policy</i>, or <i>The Foreign Service Journal</i></p> <p>Shadow a mid-level Foreign Affairs Officer for a few days</p> <p>Visit the Career Development Resource Center</p> <p>As time permits:</p> <p>Attend lectures in the local area on professionally relevant topics</p> <p>Attend Congressional hearings</p> <p>Participate in activities of professional non-profit societies and associations</p> <p>Go on informal visits (individually or with your supervisor or coworkers) to meet counterparts in other agencies/organizations</p>

\*Employees who are located outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area may find it more cost effective to take equivalent courses from the Graduate School, USDA, colleges or universities or private vendors in their local area through the FSI External Training Program. Contact the FSI Registrar's Office at (703) 302-7145.

\*\* For a more comprehensive list of courses, see *The Leadership and Management Training Continuum* <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/docs/LMSContinuum.pdf>.

\*\*\* Distance Learning Courses. For more information, visit <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sait/dl.asp>.

## Foreign Affairs: Mid-Level

As a mid-level Foreign Affairs Officer, you will continue to support higher-graded mid and senior level officers and delegations by developing, coordinating, and producing foreign public policy documents and programs. Your portfolio will expand and your focus will most likely be on collecting and analyzing, applying and communicating information related to larger geographic regions or multiple issues or programs.

You will also increase your networking and contacts with other USG agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, academia, the media and the private sector to expand your knowledge base and span of influence. Thus,

you will need to continue to develop your technical skills by completing additional area studies and tradecraft courses in such areas as intelligence, economic issues, multilateral diplomacy, international negotiations and public diplomacy as well as courses in your area of specialization such as environment, science, and technology, arms control, nonproliferation, human rights or political-military affairs.

You will also need to increase your proficiency in desktop software applications and communications technology by taking intermediate and advanced courses. Since you may assume team leadership or supervisory responsibilities, additional course work in human resource management, communication, supervision and management are also recommended.

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Mid-Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not yet taken)	<b>Foreign Affairs</b>  PE285 Economic Issues PP204 Congressional Relations PP211 Multilateral Diplomacy PP212 Intelligence and Foreign Policy PP220 Intell: How to serve the Policymakers PP501 International Negotiations: Art and Skills PP510 Global Issues PY230 New Trends in Public Diplomacy  University Training: Graduate level courses in areas of specialization	<b>Foreign Affairs</b>  Select from the following depending on specialization:  PE125 Commercial Tradecraft PE127 Petroleum and Gas Industry PE130 Aviation Policy and Negotiation PE131 Telecommunications Industry PE134 Trade Dispute Resolution PE135 Trade and Project Finance PE137 Coal and Power PE138 Intellectual Property Rights PE141 Combating Terrorist Financing PE142 Resource Economics Seminar PE150 Biotechnology in Trade and Development PE219 Legislative Affairs Orientation PE222 Trade Agreement Implementation

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<p><b>Mid-Level</b></p> <p>(See also course at earlier levels if not yet taken)</p>	<p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b></p> <p>PA123 Managing Customer Service PK240 Effective Speaking and Listening Skills PK241 Writing Effective Letters and Memos</p> <p><b>Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b></p> <p>Briefing Techniques or Speaking with Confidence</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b></p> <p>PK245 Basic Leadership Skills** PK246 Employee Relations PT107 EEO/Diversity Awareness for Managers and Supervisors PT215 Team Leadership Workshop PT216 Seven Habits of Highly Effective People PT253 Negotiation Skills For Managers</p>	<p>PE223 World Trade Organization: History and Core Principles (distance learning) PE224 Basics of International Trade (distance learning) PE250 Economic and Commercial Studies PE285 Economic Issues PE291 Trade and Environment PE504 Country Data Analysis PE562 Environment, Science and Technology PP203 Arms Control/Nonproliferation PP218 INL Orientation Workshop PP505 Political-Military Affairs PP507 Human Rights in Foreign Policy PP514 International Conflict – Peace Operations PP516 Population, Refugee, Migration Orientation PP518 Population, Refugees, and Migration Officers M&amp;E Workshop PP519 International Conflict Workshop: Prevention to Intervention PP521 International Terrorism: Threat and Response PP522 Security Assistance Workshop PY124 Managing International Visitors Programs PY125 Managing Fulbright Programs PY128 IIP Programs, Products and Services PY220 Introduction to Grants and Cooperative Agreements (distance learning)</p> <p><b>Language</b></p> <p>300 Early Morning Language Classes</p> <p><b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b></p> <p>PD520 Visual Aid Basics PY126 Speechwriting and Presentation Skills</p> <p><b>Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b></p> <p>Clear Writing Through Critical Thinking Writing for Results</p> <p><b>Leadership and Management**</b></p> <p>PT205 Performance Management Seminar PT206 Managing Change PT208 Managing State Projects PT211 Coaching PT212 Creative Problem Solving PT214 Managing Conflict Productively PT217 Running Effective Meetings Workshop PT218 Leading in a Diverse Workforce PT252 Managing Up: Working Effectively With Your Manager</p>

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Mid-Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not yet taken)	<b>Information Technology*</b> PS280 Introduction to MS Project 2000 PS433 MS Word 2003 Level Two	<b>Information Technology*</b> PS318 Internet for Power Users PS441 MS PowerPoint 2003 Level Two PS451 MS Access 2003 Level Two PS471 MS Excel 2003 Level Two PS418 Web Development Fundamentals
	<b>Recommended Rotational Assignments</b>  Rotational assignments in the following areas:  Country Desk in a regional bureau to understand regional issues  Embassy Rotation to understand the overseas environment. (May be concurrent with the rotation to a Country Desk)  Bureau of Intelligence and Research to understand intelligence issues. (Top Secret SCI clearance required)  Public Diplomacy rotation in an R organization  Assignment length varies according to needs	<b>Suggested Developmental Activities</b>  Attend the following briefings:  Intelligence Security Briefing (Bureau of Intelligence and Research)  Security Refresher Briefing (Diplomatic Security)  Commercial and Business Affairs Briefing (Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs)  Read professional journals and magazines such as <i>The Economist</i> , <i>The Foreign Affairs Journal</i> , <i>Foreign Policy</i> or <i>The Foreign Service Journal</i>  Shadow a senior level Foreign Affairs Officer for a few days  Shadow a Special Assistant to an Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary for a few days  Assist with a Secretarial, Presidential, or First Lady visit to a foreign country  Participate on a voluntary Country Task Force  Apply for a long-term training opportunity  Visit the Career Development Resource Center  Apply for a Career Development Program such as the USDA Executive Leadership Program for Mid-Level Employees or a Congressional Fellowship****  Apply for a long-term training opportunity or an OPM Residential Seminar****  Apply for the Civil Service to Foreign Service Hard-to-Fill Program, a TDY, or excursion tour to an overseas embassy or consulate****

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Mid-Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not yet taken)		As time permits:  Attend lectures on professionally relevant topics  Attend Congressional hearings  Participate in activities of professional non-profit societies and associations Go on informal visits (individually or with your supervisor or coworkers) to meet counterparts in other agencies/organizations

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\*\* For a more comprehensive list of courses, see *The Leadership and Management Training Continuum* <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/docs/LMSContinuum.pdf>. Please note that PK245, Basic Leadership Skills, is a mandatory course for GS-13 employees.

\*\*\* Distance Learning Courses. For more information, visit <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/sait/dl.asp>.

\*\*\*\* More information follows after this section on *Training for Specific Series and Job Functions*

## Foreign Affairs Senior Level

As a senior level Foreign Affairs Officer, you will be developing foreign policy positions and programs as well as advising top managers on significant foreign policy decisions and communication strategies. The ability to foresee the implications of proposed policies, programs and strategies, and gaining consensus in the foreign affairs community becomes paramount. You will be managing larger portfolios and may lead delegations.

In addition to networking extensively with contacts in the foreign affairs community, other USG agencies, foreign governments, international and nongovernmental organizations, academia, the media and the private sector, you may also interact with Congress. Thus, course work in negotiation skills, diplomatic skills and public speaking are recommended. Since you may advance to a managerial position, advanced course work in leadership and management is critical.

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Senior Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not yet taken)	<b>Foreign Affairs</b> PP204 Congressional Relations PP515 Advanced Negotiations and Negotiation Problems PY230 New Trends in Public Diplomacy  <b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b>  <b>Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b> Advanced Briefing Techniques  <b>Leadership and Management**</b> PT133 Senior Executive Threshold Seminar ** PT207 Intermediate Leadership Skills** PT210 Advanced Leadership Skills** PT213 Starting Right: A Seminar for Program Directors PT221 Four Roles of Leadership PT224 Influence By Design	<b>Foreign Affairs</b> PE290 Senior Commercial Course PP219 Legislative Affairs Orientation  Select from mid-level specialized courses as desired  <b>Language</b> 300 Early Morning Language Classes  <b>Communication/Interpersonal*</b> PY126 Speechwriting and Presentation Skills  <b>Leadership and Management**</b> PD529 Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement (distance learning) PT209 Executive Overview to Managing State Projects PT218 Leading In A Diverse Workforce

	Recommended Courses	Suggested Courses
<b>Senior Level</b>  (See also course at earlier levels if not yet taken )	<p><b>For GS-15 and above</b></p> <p>PT300 Leader as Facilitator            PT301 Appearing Effective in the Media            PT302 Testifying Before Congress            PT303 Crisis Leadership            PT304 Deputy Assistant Secretary as Leader            PT305 Executive as Coach and Mentor</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b>            Courses not taken at the mid-level as desired</p> <p><b>Recommended Rotational Assignments</b></p> <p>Rotational assignment to another Foreign Affairs or other USG agency and/or non-governmental organization, the media, academia or private company</p> <p>Assignment length varies according to needs</p>	<p><b>General Services Administration (GSA) STAR</b>            (Strategic and Tactical Advocates for IT Results) - A one-week residential seminar focusing on program and project management, leadership, security, technology, government and capital planning.</p> <p><b>Information Technology*</b>            Courses not taken at the mid-level as desired</p> <p>Take some distance learning courses through FSI's FasTrac Program. For a course catalog or to enroll, visit <a href="http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac">http://fsi.state.gov/fastrac</a> on the OpenNet.</p> <p><b>Suggested Developmental Activities</b></p> <p>Volunteer for a Departmental Task Force</p> <p>Apply for a Career Development Program such as the USDA Executive Potential Program, a Congressional Fellowship, or the Council for Excellence in Government Fellows Program***</p> <p>Apply for a long-term training opportunity or an OPM Residential Seminar***</p> <p>Apply for the Civil Service to Foreign Service Hard-to-Fill Program, a TDY, or excursion tour to an overseas embassy or consulate***</p>

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\*\* For a more comprehensive list of courses, see *The Leadership and Management Training Continuum* <http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/lms/docs/LMSContinuum.pdf>. Please note that PT207, Intermediate Leadership Skills, is a mandatory course for GS-14 employees. PT210, Advanced Leadership Skills, is a mandatory course for GS-15 employees. PT133 Senior Executive Threshold Seminar is a mandatory course for new Senior Executive Service (SES) employees.

\*\*\* More information follows after this section on *Training for Specific Series and Job Functions*